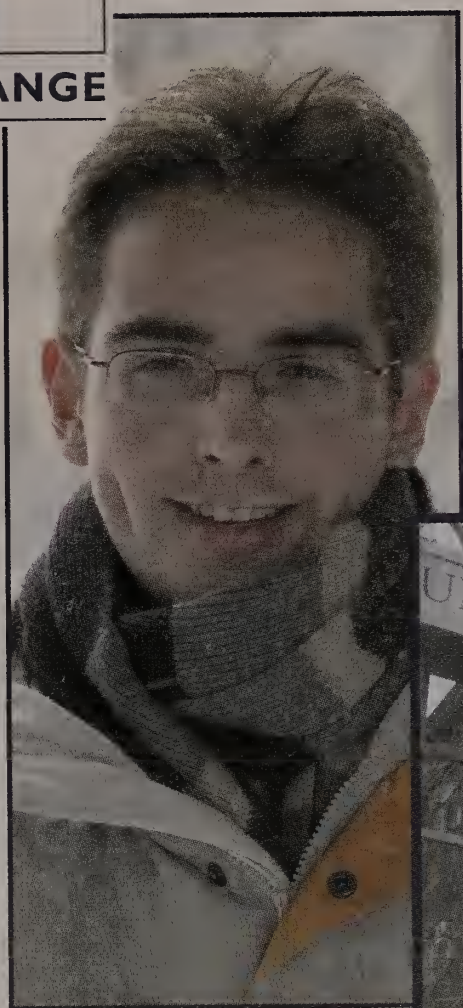


STEPPING UP

LEADING CHANGE

ACADEMIC PLAN PUTS STUDENTS FIRST



Dear students, colleagues and friends of U of T:

WE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO COMMUNITY, across our three campuses, know that the extensive process of developing the Stepping UP academic plan (2004-2010) will prove to be very valuable. Your responses to our consultation have been thoughtful and have reinvigorated our teaching and research goals. I would like to thank all students, staff and faculty who have provided input and consultation into the plan itself.

I encourage you to read the stories in the pages that follow and ask that you consider them an installment towards our efforts to demonstrate, enhance and communicate the university's renewed vision for the next five years. These stories are meant to spotlight how our faculties and divisions see Stepping UP living in their classrooms and laboratories. They show our university's commitment to the public good — through new curricula and interdisciplinary research programs, innovative teaching methods and learning initiatives that will engage our students more fully with the university and the



Professor Vivek Goel

community. Two examples only hint at what will be accomplished: our new Centre for Community Partnerships, which will integrate study and teaching with community service, demonstrating our commitment to active learning and active working relationships with the broader community; and our new Centre for Ethics, which will directly involve faculty, undergraduate and graduate students in cross-disciplinary research on high-profile ethics issues.

The five priority objectives of Stepping UP, building on the themes of excellence, equity and outreach, are: enhancing the student experience at the university; enhancing interdisciplinary, interdepartmental, interdivisional and cross-campus collaborations; linking undergraduate, graduate and professional academic programs to strong research experiences; connecting the university with the broader community (locally, nationally and internationally) through outreach and engagement in the processes of public policy development;

and achieving equity and diversity in all our activities.

We are an accomplished university of young and established scholars, from undergraduates to senior professors, and of committed and knowledgeable staff and administrators. Still, we must intensify our efforts to recruit, retain and recognize excellent faculty, staff and students. We will draw on our size and breadth; on our students' diversity (unique among the great cities and universities of the world); and on our location in the heart of Canada's largest city, which is among the most diverse in the world.

We will also continue to rely on your involvement to achieve the university's vision to become a leader among the world's best public teaching and research universities in the discovery, preservation and sharing of knowledge. Please read and watch our new website, www.steppingup.utoronto.ca/, for weekly stories and news as Stepping UP unfolds.

With my best wishes,

Vivek Goel

Professor Vivek Goel
Vice-President and Provost

STEPPING UP LEADING CHANGE

LIKE MANY COMMUTERS, FOURTH-YEAR STUDENT Stephanie Chung follows a daily ritual of travelling, attending classes, socializing and studying before hitting the road again.

Chung is actively involved in student life in her role as president of the New College Student Council but feels she's missing out on the close-knit community feeling enjoyed by one-quarter of New College's nearly 4,000 students who live in residence. To fill that void, Chung has been working with fellow students and faculty at New College to establish City House, a social club where commuter students can get to know each other and become better connected to the breadth of opportunities that make up campus life.

The idea came to life at a retreat for students, staff, faculty and alumni of New College last January. The goal of the club is to provide social space as well as a common area where students can obtain information on events taking place in residence such as intramural games and multicultural talent shows.

As a result, a commuter lounge, furnished

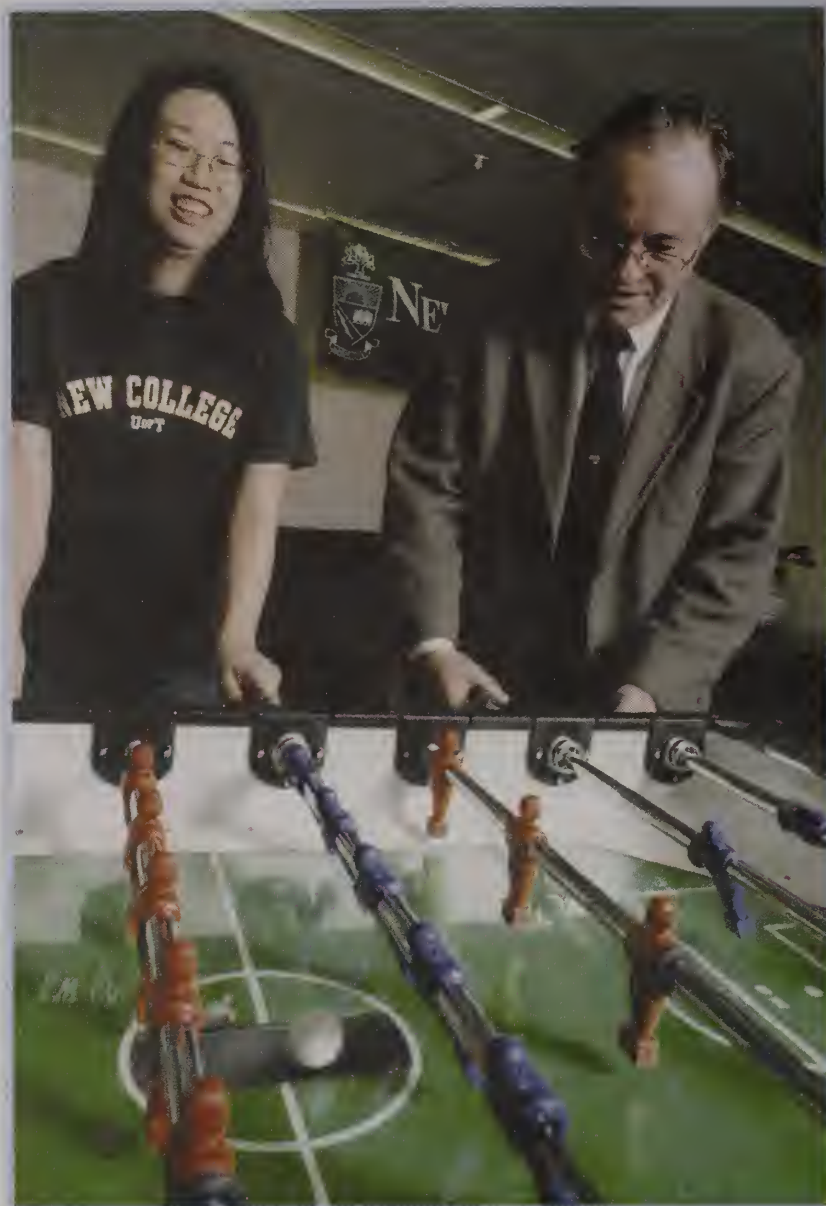
with a microwave, television, phone access and couches where students can meet each other and exchange ideas — or just play foosball — has been established at New College.

"The lounge gives them an opportunity to create an atmosphere where they will feel welcome, get to know people and start familiarizing themselves with other New College students," says Chung, who lived in residence in first year. The student council also conducted a survey with commuter students last month to find out what they would like to use the space for and the types of events they would participate in.

Principal David Clandfield believes City House is one part of the university's broader strategy to enhance the student experience. "City House will help students who may feel a bit uncomfortable inside the larger university and aren't part of a particular affinity group but would like to maintain some connection with the broader social life that the residence students have."

City House will officially launch in September.

Knowing the Score



Stephanie Chung (left), Professor David Clandfield

Real-Life Applications



Left to right: Joelle Dela Paz, graduate student; Professor Rudy Bonstra; Edward Eng, co-ordinator, Let's Talk Science

TEST TUBES AND PLASTIC LUNGS ARE NOT usually associated with volunteerism but these basic scientific instruments are helping students and faculty at the University of Toronto at Scarborough (UTSC) take community outreach to a whole new level.

By wowing elementary and high school students with finger-dusting and optical illusion demonstrations, graduate students are learning to communicate technical expertise to a lay audience — and having fun in the process. The demonstrations are part of the Let's Talk Science partnership program, a national initiative that offers students and researchers opportunities to volunteer in their local communities.

"It was really great to inspire these young students," says Joelle Dela Paz, a master's student in molecular biology. "The kids loved the forensics part of our presentation the most because they've seen a lot of shows like CSI."

While science outreach at UTSC is currently centered on graduate students, Professor Rudy Boonstra, vice-principal (research), says he hopes to include more undergraduates. "For some students, there may be a disconnect between the relevance of what they're learning and its real-life applications," he says. "This will encourage undergraduates to put their knowledge into a simpler context while integrating something really meaningful into their education."

According to Boonstra, there's a real

push towards community science outreach at all levels on campus, from students to faculty. Professors and lecturers participate in Scientists in Schools and UTSC is also part of U of T's submission to the Centres for Research in Youth, Science Teaching and Learning (CRYSTAL) pilot program, an initiative of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council that will fund research and knowledge translation/outreach programs nationwide.

Plans are also in the works to fit existing links with local schools and communities under one roof in an institute for science engagement. Boonstra says one goal of the proposed centre will be to create new research opportunities for senior undergraduates in co-operation with new industry. The institute will also support other opportunities for undergraduates to solidify their science knowledge as they bring science to fellow undergraduates and to the local community.

Science or not, outreach is an integral part of the student experience at UTSC, says Professor Kwong-loi Shun, vice-president and principal. "Learning doesn't just come from within the university but it often comes from outside," he says. "It's our responsibility as a public university to work hand in hand with the local community," Shun adds, "especially since the Scarborough community has always been very supportive in connecting our co-op students with local businesses. It truly is a symbiotic relationship."



Professor Jay Rosenfield (left) with MD/PhD student Chris Franco

First-Hand Exposure

MEDICAL STUDENTS INTERESTED IN RESEARCH will soon have an opportunity to experience it first-hand during their undergraduate curriculum at a scope unparalleled in previous years.

Now in the planning stages, the comprehensive research experience for medical students (CREMS) program will create innovative and sustained linkages between undergraduate medical education and every facet of biomedical and health research in the Faculty of Medicine, including affiliated hospitals and research institutes.

"This will be a definitive step up from current opportunities for undergraduate medical students, which primarily consist of summer research experiences with a limited number of spaces and a community research project in second year," says Professor Jay Rosenfield, undergraduate curriculum director in medicine.

The initiative will enable undergraduates to be supervised and mentored by graduate faculty through the Institute of Medical Sciences and an international dimension will be created through an alliance with U of T's Centre for International Health.

Chris Franco, an MD/PhD student and chair of this year's annual medical student research project day, says the worlds of clinical research and patient care are moving closer and closer. "This program has the potential to provide access to excellence in both worlds of research and patient care," he says.

Increased stipends through the Academic Initiatives Fund will enable those students who typically need to work in the summer to reduce their debt load and engage in research instead, Rosenfield adds.

External surveyors involved in the recent accreditation of U of T's medical school reported that while many students chose the MD program for its scientific reputation, students in the classroom felt they weren't capitalizing on U of T's leading expertise in research during early stages of the curriculum.

"This kind of integration will enable students to research areas of medical treatments that they've observed need improvement or require greater understanding," says Rosenfield, citing this as a powerful contribution to accelerating the quality of health care in Canada.

Diverse City

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF SEXUAL DIVERSITY AND orientation? What do labels and boundaries identify — and what do they suppress?

These are just a few of the questions that the proposed sexual diversity studies (SDS) centre will ask of its students — and of society. Why? Because what is being studied here is nothing less than the diversity of the human identity.

U of T's SDS program, one of the most comprehensive of its kind in North America, brings together faculty and students from over 20 disciplines including history, sociology, geography, anthropology, philosophy and law, among others.

Through such initiatives as the positive space campaign, the university tries to nurture a community that is diverse not only in its composition but in intellectual exchange as well — all of this in the heart of one of the world's most

ethnically and sexually diverse cities.

"This program gives students the opportunity to look at questions of sexuality in an interdisciplinary way while giving them a chance to do this in an overall arts and science curriculum at a time when there aren't many available opportunities to do so," says Professor David Rayside of political science, the program's co-founder.

Rayside hopes the proposed centre will not only expand the program's already broad curriculum base but will also encourage the expansion of these topics into other departments across all three campuses.

Sexual diversity studies faculty have recently received approval for designated space at University College and are hopeful of expanding the program to include a specialist degree.



Left to right: Professor David with students Anthony Navaneelan and Hilary Browning

Making Connections



Professor Ulrich Krull

THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO AT MISSISSAUGA (UTM) is growing and it's growing fast. But how does a massive expansion of this kind impact the GTA?

And how can UTM help its neighbours succeed in the aggressive global marketplace while also introducing students to the realities of the business world — students who come from not only the traditional business disciplines but the diverse classrooms of medicine, pharmacy, forensic science, community and public health, nanotechnology, even criminology?

Professor Ulrich Krull, UTM's vice-president (research) and AstraZeneca chair in biotechnology, says the answer lies inside — and outside — the walls of the new multidisciplinary BioConvergence Centre (BioCC).

"For example," Krull says, "in criminology you are very often looking at where crime comes from and the question might be, Is crime associated with a specific neighbourhood in relation to how it is constructed, the availability of jobs in the area, policing and social services that may or may not be in place etc.? At this point, a student can research, through the BioCC and through the community at hand, the relationship between these variables and, we hope, come up with an answer to improve these neighbourhoods."

The centre will work closely with Humber and Sheridan colleges, York University, local hospitals and industry as well as local and regional governments to give students a myriad of "unique, real-life laboratories in the form of both small and large businesses already in operation in the surrounding community," Krull says.

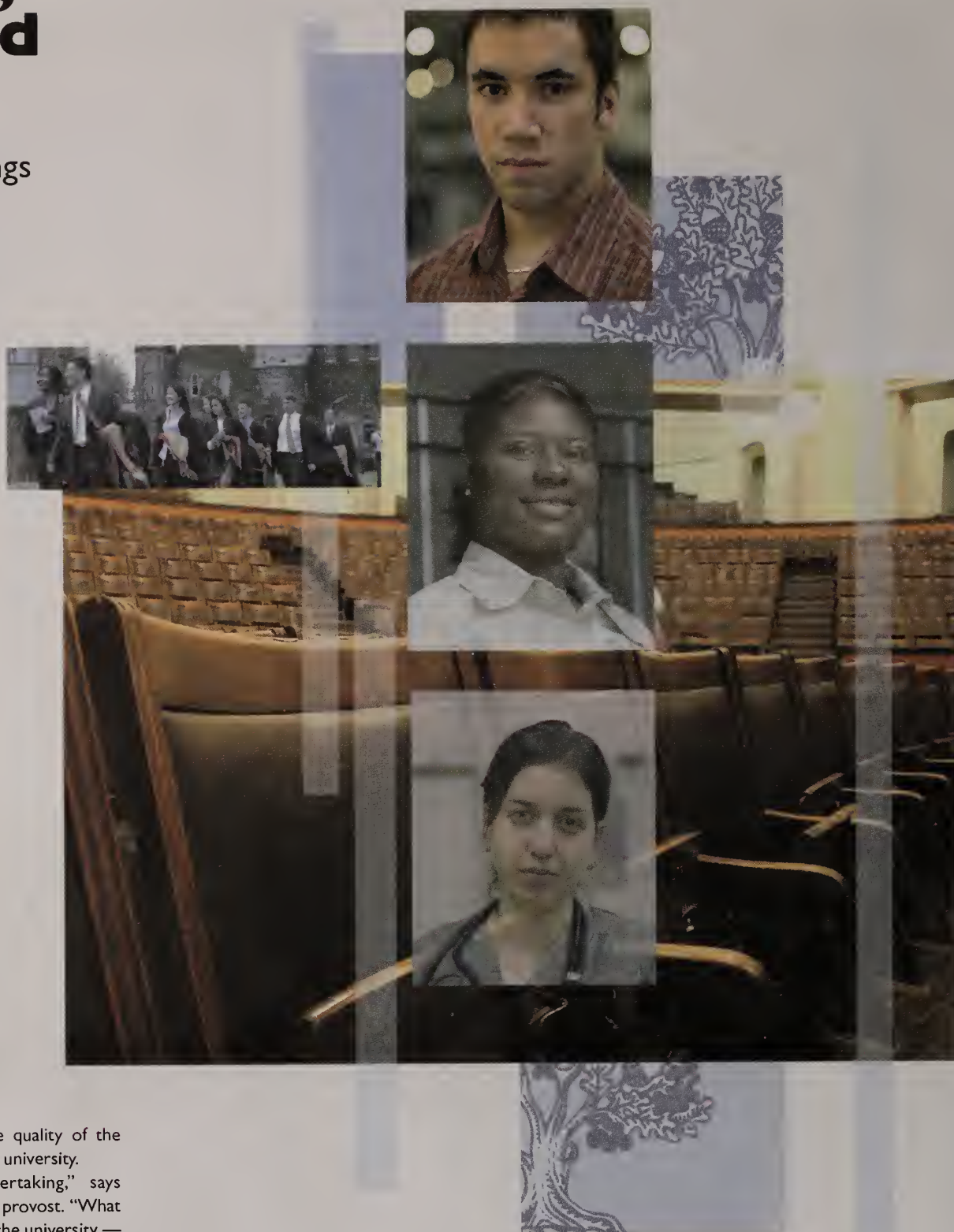
BioCC will aim to achieve its goals through three parallel and synergistic activities: scientific research and academic programming at UTM; the creation of the Mississauga technology business accelerator program; and a Healthy City stewardship centre.

"There are great opportunities opening up for our students in vastly different areas of study, Krull says. "We're investing heavily in our outplacement co-op programs and aggressively promoting outreach opportunities into the local science park and industrial communities."

The centre, he adds, will serve as a network hub for the biotechnology innovation program, "giving us a network of connectivity with the local institutions here as well as around the world through such avenues as the World Health Organization, other colleges in the neighbourhood and businesses that we could never have accessed any other way. We really are bridging academia and industry."

Priorities, Values and Vision

From town hall meetings to divisional planning, community involvement strengthens academic plan



EVERY YEAR GOVERNMENTS ANNOUNCE policies and plans for their mandates while businesses outline bottom-line goals and market-driven milestones.

For the third time in a decade, U of T has created a plan for academic success that reflects its core values and outlines the university's vision to be an international leader in interdisciplinary teaching and research, distinct in its focus on the quality of the student experience in a research-intensive university.

"This has been an enormous undertaking," says Professor Vivek Goel, vice-president and provost. "What has emerged represents a culture shift for the university — we have developed a living document that will result in a renewed spirit at U of T with a strong emphasis on enhancing the student experience."

The process to outline a new vision for the university began in 2002 with former provost Shirley Neuman. Consultations with principals and deans resulted in several green papers that were widely distributed to the university community; 14 town hall meetings were held on all three campuses and online surveys and threaded discussions resulted in some 900 pages of written responses. These results were synthesized into the white papers, which were again subject to review and input by the divisions, colleges and the community, including university governance.

From this emerged Stepping UP, the first draft of which was presented to Governing Council in December 2003. The final document was approved in February 2004, following approval by both the planning and budget committee and Academic Board. As the white paper was finalized each department, faculty, college and campus put together individual plans with priorities for teaching and research, hiring, development and capital projects, government advocacy and spending.

"This has been a broadly consultative process. The results have allowed us to set out the university's priorities, values and visions until the year 2010. These planning efforts are in keeping with our peer institutions who are also seeking to articulate distinct goals and the means to

attain them," Goel says.

From the exhaustive consultation and divisional plans five key objectives for the university have emerged: enhancing the student experience; fostering interdisciplinary collaboration; bringing together undergraduate and graduate

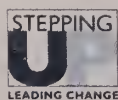
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research opportunities; connecting U of T to the broader community through policy and outreach; and improving equity and diversity. Stepping UP, Goel says, serves as a reference point for all the academic divisions; a companion

synthesis document, developed by the provost's office in consultation with principals and deans, outlines some of the actions that will make the objectives attainable.

Concurrent with the academic plan, the university has also approved a long-range budget for the same period. While planning for programs is not tied to line items in the budget, a \$30 million Academic Initiative Fund was established from existing funds to assist in implementing the academic plan — \$5 million will be available annually to the divisions for capital, operating or development initiatives resulting from their unique academic plans. The first round of allocations for funds was approved by the planning and budget committee in December 2004 and the provost has issued a call for proposals for the second round of funding for 2005-06.

"The annual nature of the Academic Initiative Fund will serve as a barometer of what's happening with the plan," Goel says. "Along with the allocations, the synthesis document will be updated as a kind of annual compendium, tracking the objectives and progress of the divisions. Stepping UP then becomes a reference point. New ideas and initiatives over the course of the next six years can be accommodated, as we continue to meet the challenges and take advantage of new opportunities."



Produced by the Department of Public Affairs for the Office of the Provost.

Photography: Front and back — Pascal Paquette, Caz Zvyatkauskas; Inside — David Street

Articles: Inside — Karen Kelly, Michah Rynor, Sue Toye; Back page — Mary Alice Thring

Throughout 2005 we'll feature weekly stories about the academic plan and the creative ways the many divisions are bringing the vision to life at www.steppingup.utoronto.ca/storyarchive.asp. To view a summary of the academic plan visit www.steppingup.utoronto.ca/synthesisindex.asp. The full document, Stepping UP: A Framework for Academic Planning at the University of Toronto, 2004 - 2010 can be found at www.provost.utoronto.ca. The Stepping UP homepage can be found at www.steppingup.utoronto.ca.